



## Policy Roundtable for Child Care

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February 3, 2012

To: Trisha Curry  
Chair, Commission for Children and Families

From: Kathleen Malaske-Samu *KMS*  
Director, Office of Child Care

### OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE TO PROPOSED STATE REDUCTIONS

The Governor's proposed budget for 2012-13 includes a series of dramatic cuts to key services for children and families. The Policy Roundtable for Child Care will be devoting its February 22, 2012 meeting to a discussion of these reductions and how we, as a County commission, can most effectively respond to these proposals. We are extending an invitation to the Commission for Children and Families to join us on February 22, 2012 from 10:00 a.m. to noon. Because we have moved this meeting from our normal meeting date – we are still in the process of finalizing the location. I will be sure to confirm the location with you as soon as it is finalized.

The following provides a brief description of reductions which the Governor has put forth for 2012-13.

- Impose Federal Work Requirements on all families receiving subsidized child development services, including those administered by the California Department of Education/Child Development Division (CDE/CDD), for an estimated statewide savings of \$293.6 million. Families currently receiving subsidized child development services where the parents are enrolled in college courses or vocational training, seeking permanent housing, and/or employment or incapacitated would no longer be eligible for services.
- Reduce the income eligibility ceiling for CDE/CDD subsidized child care from 70 percent of the State Median Income (\$3,518 per month for a family of three) to 200 percent of federal poverty level (\$3,088 for a family of three). This action is projected to generate a statewide savings of \$68 million. It could also force a single parent with two children earning \$3,089 per month to absorb child care costs of \$1,000 per a month.
- Eliminate the cost of living adjustment for child development programs for a savings of \$41.6 million. It should be noted that CDE/CDD child development programs have not received a cost of living adjustment for over four years and have absorbed reductions each year for the past three years.

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Nora Armenta  
Maria Calix  
Sam Chan, Ph.D.  
Fran Chasen

Duane C. Dennis  
Ann E. Franzen  
Robert Gilchick, M.D., M.P.H.  
Michael Gray  
Karla Pleitez Howell  
Carollee Howes, Ph.D.



Dora Jacildo  
Charlotte Lee  
Kathleen Malaske-Samu  
Jacquelyn McCroskey, D.S.W.  
Stacy Miller  
Terri Chew Nishimura, MA, OTR/L

Connie Russell  
Adam Sonenshein  
Esther A. Torrez  
Mika Yamamoto  
Ruth M. Yoon  
Sarah Younglove

- Reduce the reimbursement ceiling for voucher based programs for a savings of \$11.8 million. In Los Angeles County, this drops the reimbursement ceiling by \$80 to \$118 per month, depending on the age of the child and type of child development program. These reductions combined with the required recordkeeping, will make child care providers less willing to serve children in voucher programs.
- Reduce the reimbursement rate for CDE/CDD contracted centers by 10 percent. The current rate for programs providing full day child development services is \$34.38 per child per day. The Governor's proposal will drop the reimbursement rate to \$30.94 per child per day. The consequence of this seemingly small cut becomes apparent when calculated at the classroom level of 20 children - effectively eliminating \$16,512 per classroom per year. This reduction will net statewide savings of \$101.9 million.
- CalWORKs Stage 2 child care services are slated to be reduced by \$26.3 million due to lower caseloads and Stage 3 is to be increased by \$4.5 million. In addition, the Governor is proposing to combine Stage 1, 2, and 3 into a single program.

Based on initial calculations by the Office of Child Care, if the Governor's budget is implemented as presented, the reductions would result in:

- A loss of \$155 million in child development funding to Los Angeles County, and
- More than 27,000 children in low-income working families would lose their child development services.

### **Proposed Reorganization of Subsidized Child Development Services**

In addition to those dramatic reductions, the Governor has also proposed to move the bulk of child development services from CDE/CDD to County welfare agencies beginning in 2013-14. This transfer would represent a significant workload issue for counties. In addition, the child development services administered by County welfare departments have historically been viewed primarily as a "work support" activity. The quality of these services and their potential to prepare children for success in school and beyond has not been a priority. However, neuroscience has demonstrated that the architecture of the brain is shaped during the first three years of life, and that children's experiences before entering the K-12 system have lifelong impacts on academic, social, emotional and health outcomes. In addition, there is a growing body of research documenting that poor children can reap significant benefits from participating in high quality child development programs. Therefore, the Governor's proposal will need to be weighed carefully, considering both the immediate need to reduce State expenditures, and our responsibility to help families support the healthy development of their children.

KMS:k  
Commission 2.3.12

## **Summary of the Strengthening Families Learning Community Launch**

On January 26, 2012, the Los Angeles County Chief Executive Office (CEO) convened the first meeting of the Los Angeles County Strengthening Families Learning Community. The CEO was fortunate to have support from Casey Family Programs and the Center for the Study of Social Policy both in planning for and launching the Learning Community. Eight departments were represented, including Children and Family Services, Health, Mental Health, Parks and Recreation, Probation, Public Health, Public Library, and Public Social Services. The objective of this first meeting was to introduce and engage key County department leadership in the Strengthening Families Learning Community, including:

- Introducing the Strengthening Families approach, including the Protective Factors, and
- Exploring how the Strengthening Families approach has been implemented nationally, locally and internally.

In his welcoming remarks, William Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer, noted that County departments are working hard to meet the needs of families. This work, however, needs to be done cooperatively. Because the Strengthening Families Approach is adaptable to a variety of disciplines and offers a common language, we are hopeful that it can inform our efforts to integrate services across departments and foster collaborations with community partners.

Judy Langford, with the Center for the Study of Social Policy provided an overview of the Strengthening Families Approach. While originally conceived as a child abuse prevention strategy, the Strengthen Families Approach is now recognized as benefiting all families. Using the Protective Factors Framework as its foundation, Strengthening Families builds on family strengths, buffers risk and promotes better outcomes for children and families. Similarly, the Strengthening Families Approach builds on existing programs, systems and opportunities in the community and can be implemented through small but significant changes in everyday actions.

Ms. Langford noted that when the five Protective Factors are robust in families and their communities, families and their children thrive. The Protective Factors are:

1. Parental Resilience
2. Social Connections
3. Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
4. Concrete Support in Times of Need
5. Social and Emotional Competence of Children.

More than 30 states have developed interdisciplinary leadership teams to implement the Strengthening Families Approach. In addition, several counties and local communities have used Strengthening Families as a tool to increase collaboration among agencies, engage parent leaders more effectively, and link a range of resources.

Erwin McEwen, former Director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) shared why and how IDCFS incorporated the Strengthening Families Approach into their operations. He stated, "Child Welfare Systems should not be in the business of raising children, they should be in the business of strengthening families." The Strengthening Families Approach guided IDCFS in making this critical transition.

Mr. McEwen reported that various studies have shown that the majority of Child Maltreatment reports are related to neglect. Unfortunately, child welfare agencies tend to be better prepared to address and assess situations of abuse. IDCFS used the Strengthening Families Approach to develop more effective responses to families struggling with neglect and to rally supports

from both the public and private sectors. In addition, IDCFS used the following strategies to integrate the Strengthening Families Approach into their operations:

- Ensured that all children between three and five years of age were enrolled in quality early care and education services,
- Promoted developmentally appropriate and trauma-informed child welfare practices, and
- Embedded the Protective Factors into their child welfare practices and initiatives, and encouraged their public and private partners to do the same.

Frank Farrow, with the Center for the Study of Social Policy, briefly described the federal agencies that have engaged the Strengthening Families Approach, including:

- Department of Health and Human Services - Administration for Children, Youth and Families
  - Children's Bureau – Office on Child Abuse and Neglect
  - Office of Child Care
  - Office of Head Start
  - Maternal and Child Health Bureau
- Department of Defense
  - New Parents Program
  - Family Advocacy Program

Mika Yamamoto and Sam Chan reported on how the work underway in the Departments of Parks and Recreation and Mental Health respectively, have been informed by the Strengthening Families Approach.

The participating departments have identified representatives to the Strengthening Families Learning Community, which will be meeting on a quarterly basis. A short survey completed by departments revealed an interest in staff training opportunities in the Strengthening Families Approach and use of a common language to meet common goals. In early 2013, department heads and representatives will reconvene to assess progress and directions.

For more information on the:

- Strengthening Families Approach – [www.strengtheningfamilies.net](http://www.strengtheningfamilies.net)
- Strengthening Families Learning Community, please contact Kathy Malaske-Samu at [KMalaske@ceo.lacounty.gov](mailto:KMalaske@ceo.lacounty.gov) or 213.974.2440

The **5 Protective Factors** are the foundation of the **Strengthening Families Approach**. When the **Protective Factors** are robust in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes.

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Concrete Support in Times of Need
- Children's Social and Emotional Competence

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*Informing the Los Angeles County  
Strengthening Families Learning Community*

### The Strengthening Families Approach:

- Benefits ALL families.
- Builds on family strengths, buffers risk and promotes better outcomes.
- Can be implemented through small but significant changes in everyday actions.
- Builds on and can become a part of existing programs, strategies, systems and community opportunities.
- Is grounded on research, practice and implementation knowledge.

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*Developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy*